

Today I will share with you my CISSP exam journey.

I am Electrical Engineer and wanted to step into the cyber security field, but I was curious where to start. Then one of my friends told me about Anafi. I subscribed to the IT professional track on Anafi, and I was very much determined to put all my effort into learning courses. This was September 2020. So, I started CISSP, Python, and Linux. I was studying these three courses daily. I was studying CISSP 3 hours daily and completed the CISSP course at end of December. Then I started practice questions with explanations of answers, that were available in the CISSP course. This took almost 2 months to complete those around 750 questions. I was also studying other courses with CISSP on Anafi. At that time I had no plan to go for the CISSP exam, so I completed CISSP and started other courses, but I daily review CISSP notes that I took while studying so that I don't forget the things I studied.

In June 2021, I planned to take the CISSP exam in October 2021 because I need some type of proof for my courses to get a job. So, now I started reading Sybex's "CISSP Official Study guide" and again took more detailed notes on topics that I was clear about. I completed Sybex in mid of July.

At this time I again stepped back from taking CISSP because of comments(like you can't do it, this is for professionals and you will fail and lose your money) of some people in the IT field. I was very discouraged and also trying to get a job, but with other cyber courses on Anafi, I was daily reviewing CISSP notes.

This whole year, I was so passionately studying courses and wanted to excel in this field but I was not getting any chance in the industry. I couldn't make the decision for CISSP at that time because of fear of losing money and also so much fear of failure.

In mid of November 2021, I still was still jobless and now I decided to take the CISSP or Security+ exam. I was asking people in the cyber industry about which option I should take and praying to GOD to make the best for me. So Finally, in the last days of November, I decided to take the CISSP exam in the last week of January or the first week of February.

At this time, most of my concepts were clear because of Al-Nafi CISSP course, but mostly Domain 4 concepts were clear at that time.

Now, I changed my whole routine like sleeping early and waking up early in the morning. At this time, I borrowed hard practice questions by Thor Pederson and Mike

Meyers practice questions bundle on Udemy. I started these practice questions and marking my weak areas and clearing my concepts from different books(I shared all resources in another post). I was studying 6 to 7 hours daily and I was feeling confident because I was clearing my concepts.

In last of December 2021, I purchased the boson practice tests and ISC2 official practice tests. I was doing ISC2 tests and getting around 80%. Also watching youtube videos by different CISSP trainers, I was feeling confident every day. In Boson's first test, I get 66%, in the second 70%, and above 75% in the other 3 tests.

I watched all CISSP Mind maps videos on the Destination Certification channel. also watched Exam Cram videos on the Inside cloud and Security channel. Watched all Luke Ahmed videos on youtube. Watched all Prabh Nair CISSP videos, theses are the very best videos to clarify some concepts.

I watched all CISSP course videos on Cybrary by Kelly Handerman. This is the best, to the point video course that clears most difficult concepts in very easy way.

Before paying the fee, I had fear of failure and losing money. I had to plan to take the exam a second time. This was my first and last try.

I read "Think Like a Manager" book two times. I planned to book the exam on 12 February 2022, but couldn't book it because of some reason. January ended, and now it was the time I was completely burnt out, and it was very difficult for me to, again and again, review the same studying material, but I was doing it to keep the CISSP mindset alive. Last week I again watched all youtube videos, review all my handwritten notes, memory palace by Prashant, Sunflower notes.

The day before the exam I watched all videos on these links.

<https://youtu.be/eLYbFtS7G9E>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2Y6Zog8h2A>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bopYRxAYTU8&t=12s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nqqL1rjIY4>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dq5eodSz_0k&t=4487s

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfC9OLsCqgk>

<https://youtu.be/Qw8sYsO153s>

I paid the fee week before the exam and my exam was booked just 1 day before the exam. 24 hours before the exam I didn't study anything, just tried to remain calm and control my nerves. I tried to sleep early but I couldn't sleep the whole night.

Finally, It was exam day. I woke up early in the morning, did my breakfast, and arrived 1 hour earlier than my exam time. I was just trying to focus on the CISSP Mindset(Think like a manager).

My test started and I was trying to remain calm and control my nerves. Also trying to forget fear of failure. Starting questions were bit easy, but as I moved on questions get harder and harder. Around 70 75 question I was feeling, that I will fail and I am not doing good. When I got 101 question, at that I had only 50 minutes left and I was worried about time that I won't be able to complete 150 questions, and I started doing questions fast. Questions were difficult but I was just applying "Think like a manager" concept. At 113 question, I looked at timer and get shocked to see that I had only 35 minutes left. At that time I was feeling more fear. But when I attempted 115 my test stopped, and I was just thinking about my failure.

I stood up from seat and I looked at proctor sitting outside of exam room, which was visible because of transparent wall between two rooms. I saw that Just 1 paper came out of printer, and I relaxed because I had heard that who pass in CISSP get just one paper and who fail get two paper (one extra which has their % of scores domain wise). I looked at proctor and he said "Mubarik ho"(Congratulations), and I couldn't say him thankyou because I was not believing it.

Finally, I Passed and this success is just the blessing of God nothing else. In this whole journey my family really supported me and some friends who supported me. I am really thankful to all who supported and prayed for me.

Online Courses:

->I took the CISSP course on Alnafi.com(this course is available in more than 10 languages including Urdu). Good course and also not costly.

->Also took the CISSP course by Kelly Handerhan on Cybrary. This is the best CISSP course.

Books:

->I read "CISSP official study guide" cover-to-cover one time.

->Read some topics from "CISSP all in one exam guide" by Shon Harris.

->Read some chapters from Official ISC2 "CISSP CBK reference".

Everyone preparing for the CISSP exam must read one of these books cover-to-cover at least once.

->Also read "Think Like A Manager" by Luke Ahmed. Every CISSP aspirant must read this.

Practice Questions:

->1000 Practice questions available at end of CISSP course on Alnafi(now not available).

->1300 official ISC2 practice questions. These are best-written questions. Must try.

->750 Boson practice questions. Well-written questions and also very well explained answers. Must try.

->150 Thor Pederson hard questions. Not as much good.

->500 practice questions on Udemy by Mike Meyers. Don't recommend these. just wasted money.

->300 questions by Luke Ahmed on studynotesandtheory. Good questions to check your concepts.

->Question of the day by Went Zu.

In total did more than 3000+ questions.

Youtube:

->"study notes and theory" by Luke Ahmed.

->"Destination certification". Mind maps videos of all 8 domains.

->"Inside cloud security". Exam cram of all 8 domains.

->Videos by "Prabh Nair" on CISSP are best.

->"ITdojo" practice questions.

->Kelly Handerhan videos especially "Why you will pass CISSP".

->Larry Greenblatt's CISSP videos.

Notes:

->Notes available in Alnafi course.

->"Memory Palace" by Prashant.

->"Sunflower CISSP".

Facebook:

->"Study notes and theory" group. Largest CISSP group on facebook. Learned so much from members of the group.

->"Thor Pederson CISSP" group.

These are sources I used for my CISSP preparation and it took almost a year to prepare for this.

There are some other online courses that are also good

->CISSP course on "Study notes and theory" by Luke Ahmed. 500+ practice questions are also available. Good CISSP trainer.

->CISSP course on "Thorteaches.com" by Thor Pederson. Also have more than 800 practice questions.